

# HORN OF AFRICA BULLETIN

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The Horn of Africa Bulletin is a regional policy periodical, monitoring and analysing key peace and security issues in the Horn with a view to inform and provide alternative analysis on on-going debates and generate policy dialogue around matters of conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The material published in HAB represents a variety of sources and does not necessarily express the views of the LPI.

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## About Life & Peace Institute

Since its formation, LPI has carried out programmes for conflict transformation in a variety of countries, conducted research, and produced numerous publications on nonviolent conflict transformation and the role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding. The main focus of our work has been on Africa, with the Horn of Africa Programme being established and well-known in the 1990s, not least our work in Somalia. Other initiatives have been carried out in Congo-Brazzaville, Croatia, Sri Lanka and East Timor. We have strengthened the capacity of our civil society partners to address the conflicts in their own context, in some of the most difficult and war-torn countries.

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**A Community of Peoples: Bottom-Up Regional Integration in the Horn of Africa**

This thematic issue of the Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) on the '*A Community of Peoples: Bottom up Regional Integration in the Horn of Africa*' addresses the issue of integration in the Horn driven by bottom-up dynamics. This issue also seeks to draw attention to some of the gaps and questions bedeviling regional integration in the Horn and in the process, flag key policy questions, and suggest policy options. This thematic issue is the last issue for 2015, and it was felt that this particular theme would be a fitting way to round off the year, eliding the pattern, where themes have focused on the problems afflicting the region.

Historically, the logic of regionalism in Africa has been driven by a political-economy rationale that instrumentalized regional integration as a tool to accelerate economic development and in the process reverse the historical global economic spatiality of power which had its roots in the colonial era. In this context, regionalism through regional economic communities has always been a pressing policy concern and agenda for African governments.

The 'peace dividend' that would follow from closer economic interdependence was also a key driver in pushing the regional integration agenda. The supposed peace dividend would follow from the reduced frequency of inter-state and intra-state conflicts due to expanding economic interdependence and accelerated economic development. A related outcome in relation to the peace dividend, would be the role of regional economic groupings in conflict management, resolution and peace keeping operations.

A stocktaking of actual regional integration in Africa, however, would lead to pessimistic conclusions. No regional economic community has advanced beyond the level of a Customs Union. Economic measures of regional integration and interdependence reveal that levels of intra-regional trade and investment remain at abysmal levels and have scarcely shown any progress over the years. On the other side of the coin, some regional economic groupings such as the SADC (Southern African Development Community) and the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) have successfully engaged themselves in regional peace and security actions.

In the Horn, the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority for Development) provides the institutional framework for regional integration. An assessment relying solely on formal and macro-level indicators of regional integration<sup>[1]</sup> would show that the region lags behind other regional groupings in Africa. The structural obstacles to regional integration in the Horn are also critical in understanding the difficulties in accelerating economic integration.<sup>[2]</sup> The IGAD has also achievements to its credit in the peace and security sphere as exemplified by the IGAD's efforts in Somalia and mediation efforts to resolve the South Sudan crisis. Cooperation between states in the Horn in sphere of hydroelectric power generation and distribution, large scale road and rail projects and port utilization are another sphere where there has been substantial progress.

While the track record and prognosis for formal economic integration in the IGAD may appear bleak, this is only one side of the picture. There are dynamics that are often overlooked, which show that the IGAD region is actually even more integrated than captured by conventional measures of integration. One instance of this would be the critical role of ICBT (Informal Cross Border Trade) which plays a key role in the economies and livelihoods of borderland populations and closely ties together the Horn economies. Another aspect that reveals the closely integrated nature of the Horn would be migration flows in the region and the vital role of labour migrants in some Horn countries. These facts underline the criticality of informal and

bottom-up processes in understanding the scale and depth of regional integration in the Horn and point to the importance of policy makers addressing the informal dynamics that link the Horn.

Some of the articles in this issue of the HAB highlight actually existing spaces and processes of bottom-up regionalism. The article by Said Ismael, 'La Somalie, un acteur majeur de l'intégration régionale « par le bas » dans la Corne de l'Afrique' discusses the Somali role in bottom-up regionalism in the Horn which he argues was primarily driven by aspects of Somali culture and also innovative financial systems. He makes the point that the AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) in terms of its emergence and composition can be viewed as a hybrid AU-IGAD force and furthermore heralds the IGAD's expanding peace and security role in the Horn. This piece highlights the potential for bottom-up regionalism in the Horn and indirectly the importance of policymakers developing policy options that will harness this potential. The jointly authored piece (Dr. Ibrahim Farah, Ms. Valentine Opanga and Ms. Saadia Abdishakur) titled, "Eastleigh 'Little Mogadishu' and its traditional integration into the East African economy: The secret, challenges and opportunities" adds another layer to the Somali role in deepening regional integration in the Horn by specifically focusing on the Eastleigh neighbourhood in Nairobi, Kenya. It points to the economic benefits and integration wrought by Somali migrants displaced by the crisis in Somalia, while at the same time discussing the difficulties and suspicions that the community had to face due to the problems associated with the struggle against terrorism. This piece points to some of the dilemmas facing governments and states in the Horn where cross-border human mobility unleashes profound economic payoffs, while also at the same time bringing along with it some peace and security dilemmas. The article by Sekou Toure Otondi, 'The place of Civil Society Organizations in EAC integration process' discusses the input of civil society organizations in the EAC (East African Community). He argues that policymakers in regional economic groupings need to create space for civil society as a means to ensure buy-in and participation from the citizenry, which otherwise would have little stake in the success or failure of formal regional integration. The article by Surafel Wondimu, is a descriptive and analytical take on the "Crossing Boundaries Performing Arts Festival and Conference" held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> September, 2015) involving artists and intellectuals drawn from East Africa, North Africa and Diaspora communities from Israel and the USA. The article points to the novel and striking success of the organizers in creating 'independent spaces' for performance and dialogue between artists/intellectuals drawing on the resources and capabilities of the artists/intellectuals. The Festival-Conference is also another example of bottom-up regionalism driven by local actors and based on local agency. The article by Dr. Tim Murithi identifies reconciliation at the regional level as a useful means to manage and resolve intra-state and inter-state conflicts in the Horn of Africa. The article mentions several conflicts in the region and shows that while two modes of regional reconciliation have often been resorted to, people to people reconciliation has often been neglected. The author argues that (people to people) reconciliation efforts are central to long term conflict resolution in the Horn.

[1] Conventional indicators of economic integration rely mainly on economic measures such as; intra-regional trade (imports and exports) as percentage/proportion of total trade flows, intra-regional investment (incoming and outgoing) as percentage/proportion of total investment, frameworks governing and barriers to capital investment at the regional level etc. Of these, intra-regional trade is usually taken as the most critical indicator of integration.

[2] The lack of complementarity between Horn economies, distinct socio-economic policies and types of states, the pattern of intra-state conflict where antagonists often draw support from

neighbouring states, the pattern of inter-state tensions and conflicts etc.

Demessie Fantaye

Editor

Life & Peace Institute

KENYA

## Eastleigh ‘Little Mogadishu’ and its traditional integration into the East African economy: The secret, challenges and opportunities

By Ibrahim Farah, Saadia Abdishakur, Valentine Opanga

Since the collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s, the Somali people have been forced to navigate a very volatile landscape; within Somalia and beyond, from the east and Horn of Africa sub-region to the Gulf and way beyond, for example, in Europe, North America, and in Asia. The country produced millions of internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees and asylees many of them turning themselves into *diasporas*; having both positive and negative effects on the general welfare and life of the Somali inside and outside the country. Kenya was not spared either. As of September 2015, almost half a million refugees were registered in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya; most of them Somalis. Also, the Somali people have historically inhabited the North Eastern part of Kenya.

Many Somalis, including a large number of refugees – mainly those in Nairobi and Mombasa – are involved in innovative commercial ventures.<sup>[1]</sup> They have also become established in various Kenyan towns and cities and are now engaged in a range of business activities. The success of Somali businesspeople in Kenya has also attracted new investment from Somalis in the Middle East and further afield. However, the vigorous booming- and somehow unregulated-economy which flourished in post-1991 Somalia has been exported to various parts across the globe, including Kenya.

This article aims to provide an overview of Eastleigh also known as ‘*Little Mogadishu*’ or ‘*Muqdisho Yarey*’ in Somali as an instance of bottom-up regional business integration. The study is not exhaustive. Instead, it takes a holistic approach meant to give the bigger picture on- and in answering the questions – what is there? Why and how did Somali businesses integrate? In other words, what is the secret? What are the challenges and opportunities facing the Somali business community in Kenya? The overall objective of this article is to showcase the business hub of Eastleigh as an instance of economic-commercial integration in the East African economy.

### **Eastleigh ‘Little Mogadishu’ and its traditional business integration: The secret**

There are about 200,000 Somalis in Nairobi’s Eastleigh estate. These include Somali-Kenyans, refugees and Somalis from Somalia- both legal as well as illegal immigrants – almost all of whom are involved in business. According to the Eastleigh Business Community (EBC), Somali businesses and trade volume accounts for over Ksh 2.9 billion per year; almost one-third of Nairobi’s overall economy.<sup>[2]</sup> Most Somali business activities in Kenya are centred in Nairobi’s Eastleigh neighborhood.

The economic transformation of Eastleigh has brought a new level of competition to Nairobi, substantially reducing the cost of goods and services. This uniquely, growing Somali investment in Nairobi has also attracted banks and other service-providers,

demonstrating that urban refugees are not necessarily a burden on the State; and that instead, they can also become an economic asset. Remittances from the Somali *diaspora* also boost Somali businesses.[3]

Eastleigh also oversees Somali business - and other - developments in the east, central, and the Horn of Africa sub-region as it provides technical support and back up: From start-up to sustainment. After Mogadishu, and to some extent Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Eastleigh is probably the epicenter of Somalia's informal economy and still remains so. For example, airlines such as East Africa, African Express and Juba, all owned by Somalis, offer transport links and connections across the world. Different bus companies such as Maslah, Ocean Bus Services, and Gateway- also owned by Somalis- link Eastleigh and its residents to different parts of the country: Garrissa, Wajir, Mandera, Mombasa as well as the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps.

Eastleigh's commercial sector is dominated by Somalis, with most if not all, businesses owned by members of the Somali community. According to the local Member of Parliament, Yusuf Hassan, Somalis have invested heavily in the enclave, contributing over \$1.5 billion in the neighborhood alone. As of September 2015, Hassan further argues that Eastleigh accounted for around 25 percent of the [Nairobi City Council](#)'s tax revenues.[4] Members of the wider Somali business community are involved in almost all sectors of Kenya's economy, ranging from the informal *hawala* banking and forex sector to the real estate and construction sector, to the energy sector,[5] to general trade. These businesses extend from Kenya's borders to the east and Horn of Africa sub-region and with import/export trade links with countries outside the Africa region and beyond; expanding all the way to the Far East Asia.

There are a number of factors that explain the success of the Eastleigh business hub and its traditional integration into the east African economy.

Firstly, since the early 1990s, Eastleigh has developed dramatically and, shaped by its growing population, it has become a major business and shopping district in Nairobi and in the east African economy. Businesspeople, including incoming refugees, have invested in import and export businesses, retail outlets, chemists, property letting and real estate development, hotels, lodges, cafés and restaurants, long-distance transport companies, taxis, phone/internet bureaus, and international money transfer and exchange services.[6]

Secondly, the collapse of the Somali state led to a new, out-of-the-box thinking; hence very enterprising Somalis businesspeople. As a result, the pre-war, formal Somali economy was turned into a communal, trust-based informal economy. This, coupled with the enterprising nature of Somali business people, was also a key factor to make and succeed even in difficult situations and times.

Thirdly, in Kenya, there exists a Somali (Kenyan) community and the Somali kinship system facilitated the process of Somali business enterprises.

Fourthly, Kenya already had a large informal economy of its own. The livelihood of most

inhabitants of Nairobi depends on this due to the increasing decline of wage employment in the public sector. As a result, integration was also much easier since the Kenyan economy is penetrable.

Finally, Islam also did play a major role in the trust concept of Somali business dealings: from *Hawalas*, to the provision of interest-free credit facilities (both individually and in groups), to the crafting of business partnerships based on profit/loss sharing.

### **Challenges**

There are a number of challenges facing business enterprises Eastleigh's business enterprise. One could mention; the effects of 9/11, the operations of the Kenya's Defense Forces (KDF) in Somalia, business infrastructure in Eastleigh, and the identity of the Somali and police brutality.

Since the early 2000s, 9/11 has been a landmark moment for the Somali people and their businesses. The 9/11 attacks led to a fundamental shift in international relations and the new 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT). The Somali crisis was a defining moment for US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. It created what is called 'the Somali syndrome,' a risk-averse approach to civil conflicts in conflicted areas.<sup>[7]</sup> However, the onset of the GWOT coupled with the intensification of the battle against terrorism- as well as counter-terrorism- has also affected Somalia and Somalis, and economic enterprises have been impacted. This period, for example, saw the forceful closure of operations of *Al-Barakaat*, the biggest Somali remittance company in Somalia at the time.<sup>[8]</sup>

Life has not been the same in Eastleigh since the KDF crossed into Somalia in 2011 in their fight against *Al-Shabaab*; and later on joining the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Somali economic enterprises, Kenyans of Somali origin and migrants from Somalia have increasingly been viewed with suspicion and as a source of threat. *Al-Shabaab* operations in Kenya have further exacerbated this situation.<sup>[9]</sup>

Despite its fast-growing economic and business activities, Eastleigh suffers from a lack of basic public services and infrastructure such as clean water, sewage system and safe, usable roads. There is also the question of perception vs. misperception. For example, many Kenyans consider Eastleigh to be a centre of illicit trade and corrupt business dealings and practices.

One other major security-related problem is also that of the double identity of the Somali (Somali-Kenyan, Somali, or Kenyan) and the increasing police brutality that is enmeshed with the Somali region's history vs. past Kenya-Somalia relations. Many observers attribute this identity problem to the neglected state of infrastructure, the dangerously-constructed buildings in Eastleigh and the inability of Somalis to demand or assert their rights on account of their politically-dented refugee population.

### **Opportunities**

Other than the many challenges Eastleigh faces, there are also many opportunities. For example, the growth of Somali businesses in Nairobi has attracted banks and other

service-providers; thus creating more jobs for Kenyans. Such service-providers have adapted their business behaviour and working hours to accommodate the demands of the Somali business community in Kenya. Examples include the introduction and application of Islamic banking system, respect for the Holy month of *Ramadan*, the Islamic dress code among other issues. Somali-owned businesses have also created jobs for local unskilled workers. Somali employers also tend to pay more for similar work than non-Somalis and many Nairobian increasingly turn towards Eastleigh to earn a living.

As part of the Somali network, business operators have expanded onto the east, central and Horn of Africa sub-region; hence facilitating regional integration by other means: informal, non-traditional, regional economic integration.<sup>[10]</sup> Additionally, the proximity to Somalia and integration of businesses in the two countries (eg, Somalia as the centre and Kenya as the base for logistics and liaison) has further enhanced integration.

The enterprising history of Somalis in Kenya and beyond has also played a key role in the establishment of and the successful maintenance of their businesses. Despite the negative perceptions, sometimes deployed by the Kenyan press, the reality is that these enterprises offer much that is of benefit to Kenya. Eastleigh also acts as a central point for the distribution of goods around the east African sub-region.

### **Conclusion**

Although not as scientific, the article provided an overview of Eastleigh as a business factor in Kenya and beyond: the east/Horn of Africa sub-region, and as a subject in driving bottom-up business integration in the region. It briefly discussed the secret of this integration, the challenges and opportunities. Finally, it has showcased that Somalis use their clan-based, mutually trusted traditional, business networks to create geographically-dispersed trading networks as they seek new markets and partners.

There are a number of challenges but also opportunities for Eastleigh and its model of integration in the east African economy. However, the lesson to be drawn from the business experiences of Somalis in Eastleigh and beyond is that entrepreneurs need an enabling environment. Somalis in Kenya have created such an environment by circumventing formal structures, and states in the eastern Africa sub-region should therefore seek to build formal structures that do not drive entrepreneurs to confine themselves to the informal sector.

Finally, the secret behind this uniquely traditional and at the same time novel model of Somali business in the sub-region and how best it can be of more benefit for the new Somalia and its formal integration into the east African economy also calls for further research.

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[2] Business Daily, *Somalis Create their Global Commercial Hub in Nairobi's Eastleigh Estate* Retrieved from [www.businessdailyafrica.com](http://www.businessdailyafrica.com) Accessed on 12/12/2015; See more Abdulsamed, F. (2011). Somali Investment in Kenya. Africa Programme Briefing paper, Chatham House.

[3] Ibid.

[4] MP Hassan, a second term parliamentarian from the Somali-Kenyan community is an advocate for the commercial hub and the enterprising nature of the Somali. Eastleigh is part of his Kamukunji constituency and he has introduced a number of development projects since he came to office. See also the series "Kamukunji Outlook Newsletter."

[5] Hass Petroleum is one of the best Somali-owned companies in the energy sector in the east and Horn of Africa sub-region. Not only in Somalia and Kenya, Hass Petroleum is also operating in Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Rooted in the family name (Hass for Hassan), Hass Petroleum was founded in 1997 by two Somali brothers, the late Abdirizak Ali Hassan and Abdinasir Ali Hassan, The company recently won major agreements with the Government of Kenya.

[6] Ibid.

[7] See Patman Robert, *The Roots of Strategic Failure: The Somalia Syndrome and Al Qaeda's Path to 9/11*, *International Politics*, 52, 89-109, 2014, (Accessed on January 2015)

[8] See for example Business Daily, *Somalis Create their Global Commercial Hub in Nairobi's Eastleigh Estate* Retrieved from [www.businessdailyafrica.com](http://www.businessdailyafrica.com) Accessed on 12/12/2015

[9] See more in Mwaura Samora, *The Somali Question*, World Policy Institute, 2013

[10] See more Campbell, E.H. (2005) *Formalizing the informal economy: Somali refugee and migrant trade networks in Nairobi*, Geneva: Global Commission on International Migration Global Migration Perspectives No. 47.



## La Somalie, un acteur majeur de l'intégration régionale « par le bas » dans la Corne de l'Afrique

By Said Ishmael

Malgré l'effondrement de l'économie formelle et de l'administration centrale somaliennes, un système économique réel a émergé, profitant du manque de bureaucratie et des systèmes des transferts de fonds de la diaspora. En effet, les entrepreneurs somaliens ont su démontrer leur capacité à prospérer dans la Corne de l'Afrique, en dépit du conflit et de l'instabilité régnant depuis 1991 en Somalie. Ce modèle principalement fondé sur les relations claniques traditionnelles s'est dans un premier temps exporté avec les émigrés somaliens au Kenya et a ensuite gagné d'autres pays de la région.

La Corne de l'Afrique constitue un laboratoire utile et riche d'enseignements pour étudier les dynamiques de l'intégration régionale. L'objectif de ce papier est d'analyser et illustrer comment le capital social des somaliens est devenu un facteur intégrateur du commerce régional dans la Corne de l'Afrique.

### Rappel historique

La Somalie est un État failli depuis la chute du dictateur Syad Barre en 1991. L'instabilité a touché profondément les secteurs politiques et économiques du pays. À bien des égards, la fin du régime de Syad Barré dans lequel l'économie était entravée par le clientélisme et la corruption politique, a libéré l'esprit entrepreneurial des hommes d'affaires somaliens. Depuis lors, l'économie somalienne opère sans régulation gouvernementale. De ce fait, une nouvelle forme de réseau d'affaire s'est développée en Afrique de l'Est, impliquant la diaspora disséminée dans le monde. Ce réseau d'affaire s'est mis en place grâce aux liens étroits de ses membres fondés à la fois sur des bases claniques et sur la confiance.

### Cadrage théorique

Dans la littérature académique, on distingue deux formes d'intégration différenciée, l'une formelle et l'autre informelle :

- **L'intégration différenciée formelle** concerne l'espace politique, la politique et les politiques publiques

Il existe trois Communautés Economiques Régionales (CER) en Afrique de l'Est :

- L'Autorité Intergouvernementale pour le Développement (IGAD) est une construction institutionnelle (*institutional building*) et correspond à la définition suggérée par qui voit dans le régionalisme comme l'application d'une stratégie par les acteurs du projet d'intégration.<sup>[1]</sup>
- La Communauté d'Afrique de l'Est (EAC) correspond à l'intégration dans laquelle des États qui partagent une même langue, en l'occurrence le Swahili et qui sont géographiquement proches, tentent de s'affranchir des frontières douanières pour

favoriser la formation des marchés intégrés et ainsi améliorer leurs relations économiques.[2]

- Le Marché Commun de l'Afrique Orientale et Australe (COMESA) regroupe en 2015 dix-neuf Etats membres. Il répondrait à la définition de Bourenane (1996) qui définit l'intégration comme un « processus résultant d'une démarche volontaire de deux ou de plusieurs ensembles de partenaires, appartenant à des Etats différents, en vue d'une mise en commun d'une partie de leurs ressources » Selon l'auteur, « ce processus a pour finalité l'émergence et le renforcement des relations techniques et économiques d'interdépendance structurelle, à effet d'entraînement positif sur les revenus ».[3]
- Tandis que **l'intégration différenciée informelle** est un produit dérivé de la première et qui conduit à **une intégration par le bas** ou une intégration horizontale à travers diverses strates de la société.

Dans la Corne de l'Afrique, le secteur informel a entrepris un processus d'intégration par le bas qui connaît ses propres règles et qui profite de la similitude des peuples à la frontière. Philippe Hugon note que « les échanges informels » sont souvent analysés comme traduisant le caractère artificiel des frontières et permettent de créer des « zones de libre-échange de fait » en augmentant le bien-être des consommateurs.[4]

### Analyse

- Intégration économique par les peuples
- Le « Little Mogadiscio » du District d'Eastleigh au Kenya

Le modèle de commerce informel développé à Mogadiscio, où la population vit dans l'instabilité permanente depuis des décennies, a été importé à Nairobi, générant une création d'activité et d'emploi très importante. Ce phénomène s'est notamment développé dans le district de Eastleigh, communément appelé « Little Mogadiscio ». Eastleigh est un quartier de Nairobi très densément peuplé avec peu ou aucune présence de l'Etat comme acteur de régulation de l'économie. L'Etat kényan y intervient donc rarement si ce n'est dans sa lutte contre le terrorisme.

Grâce aux importations en provenance de Dubaï et de Chine, les somaliens vendent leurs produits de biens et de services aux consommateurs locaux et régionaux à des prix inférieurs à ceux du marché. Les élites commerçantes d'origine indienne installées depuis le début du XXe siècle, ont pâti de cette compétition à bas coût imposée par les commerçants somaliens de Eastleigh. La croissance des investissements somaliens à Nairobi a attiré les banques et d'autres prestataires, tels que des agences de voyages et de télécommunications.

Eastleigh a gagné en attractivité au fil des années. La visibilité de cette place commerçante a atteint l'Ouganda, l'Ethiopie, la Tanzanie, le Burundi et le Soudan du Sud en érigeant en place commerciale essentielle pour une grande partie des marchés de l'Afrique l'Est.

L'anthropologue Dr Paul Goldsmith, qui a analysé la montée du capital financier de la diaspora somalienne au Kenya. Il attribue l'expansion du mercantilisme somalien à ce

qu'il qualifie de lignage segmentaire, un système d'honneur basé sur les liens familiaux et claniques dans la société somalienne.[5] Suite au développement et au renforcement de ces liens, les individus sont liés par un système obligatoire de confiance et responsabilité, appelé « Aamano ». Par exemple, ce système d'honneur dit « Aamano » explique que le paiement d'une dette ancienne envers un homme en Somalie constitue la responsabilité de tout un clan, partout où ses membres se trouvent. En d'autres termes, il s'agit d'une sorte de dette souveraine: elle doit être remboursée de manière collégiale par tous les membres de ce clan.

Selon le Goldsmith, les facteurs culturels qui ont contribué au succès du commerce somalien, sont d'une part que les somaliens sont des « *risk-takers* ». Prendre des risques est une condition de survie en Somalie. D'autre part, les réseaux que les somaliens ont développés dans les grands hubs commerciaux, tels que Dubaï, ainsi que leurs relations d'entraide ont joué un rôle dans le développement et le renforcement du commerce somaliens.

Le recours à la confiance réciproque comme garantie réduit de fait les procédures bureaucratiques et facilite ainsi les possibilités de coopération. Enfin, de nombreux entrepreneurs ont débuté dans l'économie informelle et ont élargi leurs entreprises en les transformant en centre commerciaux opérant ainsi à l'intérieur de l'économie formelle.

- Kenya-Ouganda-Somaliland

Amina Hersi Moghe, classée parmi les dix plus riches personnalités d'Ouganda, est un exemple probant de réussite des entrepreneurs dans l'intégration régionale par le bas en Afrique orientale. Née au Kenya, elle est la fille d'un ancien secrétaire d'état du ministre des finances du Kenya et originaire du Somaliland. Amina a reçu une première distinction en 2008, le prix de « Best Woman Entrepreneur » en Ouganda et a été récompensée pour sa contribution à l'attraction des investissements directs étrangers dans le pays. En 2013, l'ancien président kényan Mwai Kibaki lui remettait le prix « Moran of the Burning Spear (MBS) », la désignant comme une personnalité clé pour la promotion des affaires au sein de l'EAC, ceci étant le principal moteur de l'intégration régionale. Enfin, elle a reçu le prix de la Femme Entrepreneur de l'Année 2014 en Afrique au London Stock Exchange par le journal britannique THE NEW ECONOMY.

Elle est propriétaire de plusieurs centres commerciaux et dirige Kingstone Limited, l'une des entreprises leaders dans la distribution de ciment. De passage à Hargeisa l'année dernière, elle a manifesté sa volonté d'investir au Somaliland et d'établir des relations économiques entre l'Ouganda et le Somaliland.

- **Finance : Dahabshil un acteur régional**

Le secteur financier est le principal moteur de toutes les activités commerciales somaliennes. Ce système est principalement basé sur les systèmes de transfert d'argent appelés «hawala». C'est en l'occurrence le système d'honneur « Aamano » qui explique l'émergence de la hawala et du florissant commerce somali.

En effet, le système hawala constitue le centre névralgique des activités commerciales somaliennes. La principale entreprise de la hawala, la compagnie Dahabshil est devenue un acteur bancaire majeur au Soudan du Sud, jeune pays qui se trouvait dans une situation similaire à la Somalie et qui compte beaucoup sur sa diaspora. Le taux de commission est au maximum de 5% pour les petites sommes expédiées et peut atteindre jusqu'à 0.2% pour les sommes supérieures à 5000\$ et défie donc toute concurrence.

Les commerçants somaliens ont eu rapidement du succès dans la mobilisation des crédits provenant de leur communauté pour les programmes et les projets. Grâce à des services de la hawala, les fonds peuvent être levés en un court laps de temps, non seulement en Somalie mais dans le monde entier.

La combinaison de l'accès au prêt à financer à travers les réseaux claniques et du mouvement rapide et peu onéreux du capital à travers le système hawala est au cœur de l'entreprise somalienne.

### • **Somalie : le centre d'une future coopération sécuritaire régionale ?**

Les récentes avancées militaires contre les milices Al-Shabab en Somalie laissent augurer un renforcement de la coopération régionale, en particulier suite au ralliement des forces kényanes, djiboutiennes et éthiopiennes à l'AMISOM, comprenant déjà en son sein les troupes burundaises et ougandaises. Ces dernières victoires ont débuté notamment lors de l'intervention des troupes kényanes et ensuite éthiopiennes. L'ancien Ministre de la Défense kényan Mohamed Yusuf Haji, d'origine somali et issu d'un des clans majoritaires dans la région de Kismayo, a été le fer de lance de l'opération Linda Nchi[5] dans le sud de la Somalie. Cela lui aurait permis d'acter rapidement une coopération militaire et sécuritaire avec le gouvernement de transition somalien pour lutter contre les insurgés Al-Shabab.

A l'exception des troupes burundaises, tous les autres pays contributeurs sont membres de l'IGAD, conduisant certains experts à qualifier l'AMISOM de force hybride Union Africaine-IGAD officieuse. Ceci laisse envisager un début de coopération régionale sécuritaire des pays de l'Afrique de l'Est, sous la bannière de l'AMISOM. A sa création en 1986, l'IGAD avait pour mandat de combattre la désertification et la famine dans la Corne de l'Afrique. Depuis, l'autorité se transforme peu à peu en une véritable entité régionale politique, économique et sécuritaire.

### **Conclusion**

L'intégration « par le bas » possède ses règles propres et profite de la proximité des peuples à la frontière. Les somaliens ayant profité du truchement du secteur informel et sont devenus un acteur majeur de l'intégration régionale en Afrique de l'Est. Ainsi, il existe un immense potentiel économique entre les zones frontalières Ethiopie-Somalie, Kenya- Ethiopie mais aussi à travers toute la Corne de l'Afrique

Il serait très pertinent d'étudier plus en profondeur la montée de l'esprit d'entreprise des somaliens dans la région. Ceci pourrait nous donner une projection plus large et

instructive des évolutions de la coopération régionale en Afrique de l'Est dans un futur proche. Enfin, il apparaît que l'intégration ne se détermine pas selon des règles préétablies, puis institutionnalisées mais plutôt qu'elle est le résultat des peuples qui, ayant pris conscience de leur destin œuvrent pour défendre leurs intérêts.

*[Summary] Somalia: A Major Player in Regional Integration from Below in the Horn of Africa*

*Said Ismael's article Somalia, A Major Player in the Regional Integration From Below in the Horn of Africa aims to analyse the process of commercial integration from below in the Horn of Africa and in particular the role played by Somalis and their cultural and clan-related features.*

*The vacuum of economic regulation that followed the collapse of Syad Barre's regime in 1991 led to the development of new forms of business networks in the country and in Eastern Africa. Theoretically speaking, the regional integration in the Horn of Africa has taken two distinct shapes: a formal one through the creation of entities like the IGAD and the EAC; and an informal regional integration based on the role played by the peoples of the region (from below).*

*More specifically, three main dynamics of regional integration in the Horn are identified and concisely analysed; and highlight the major role played by Somalia: the economic integration through the peoples; the role played by the Somali financial sector; and the premises of a security regional cooperation between the countries of the region.*

*The analysis first focuses on illustrating the economic integration through the peoples. The model of informal trade characteristic of "Little Mogadishu" in Nairobi's suburb Eastleigh (Kenya) is presented. Based on several scholars' works, the author analyses the development of "Little Mogadishu" as being related to the expansion of the Somali mercantilism which owes its success beyond borders to Somali cultural features, e.g. the honour system called "Aamano" - a system based on trust and accountability between and within the clans; the culture of risk in the Somali society and the density of Somali networks in dynamic trade hubs abroad. In addition, the Somali financial sector has played a major role in the expansion of the Somali trade in the region. The Somali money transfer system, called "hawala" and based on the "Aamano" system, constitutes an efficient fundraising system for Somali traders worldwide.*

*Lastly, the analysis moves away from economic integration and questions the strengthening of the security cooperation between the countries of the region through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). With the exception of Burundi, all troop-contributing countries belong to the IGAD previously mentioned. Therefore the AMISOM appears as an hybrid force AU-IGAD, illustrating the IGAD's increasing economic but also political and security influence in the region.*

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## People-to-People Regional Reconciliation in the Horn of Africa

By Tim Murithi

The Horn of Africa has endured the debilitating effects of violent conflict for several decades. Despite policy frameworks and the utilisation of significant resources to stabilise countries, conflicts in the region have remained resistant to resolution. The Horn of Africa's crises demonstrate that conflicts have a tendency to spill across borders, affecting communities in more than one country.<sup>[1]</sup> Traditional inter-state wars in the region have been increasingly replaced by intra-state conflicts. However, these intra-state conflicts, more often than not, have an inter-state or regional dimension in the way that they are resourced and executed. Furthermore, the Horn of Africa demonstrates that intra-state conflicts usually have a regional dimension, as they include more than one state as either the primary or secondary actor. The Horn of Africa's regional conflict systems is notoriously difficult to stabilise, as the implicated state actors do not adopt a coordinated regional strategy to promote and consolidate peace.<sup>[2]</sup> It is therefore increasingly evident that regional reconciliation is required to ensure consolidated peace. The absence of a coordinated approach to regional reconciliation in the Horn of Africa, and the lack of resources and capacity means that these mechanisms remain incapable of promoting and sustaining regional peace, justice and reconciliation.

### Regional Reconciliation in Context

Political reconciliation requires that the affected parties i) recognise their *interdependence* as a prerequisite for consolidating peace; ii) engage in genuine *dialogue* about questions that have caused deep divisions in the past; iii) embrace a *democratic attitude* to creating spaces where they can disagree; and iv) work jointly to implement processes to address the legacies of *socio-economic exploitation and injustices*.<sup>[3]</sup> At the heart of reconciliation are justice and equity.<sup>[4]</sup> Traditionally, the focus has been on national reconciliation. The question is whether or not we can scale up national reconciliation to begin to talk about regional reconciliation.

Since conflicts, atrocities and violations straddle borders, we have to determine how reconciliation can also take place across borders. It becomes clear that we are talking about processes for which we do not have any precedents in of Africa.

Regional reconciliation would require implementing processes of truth recovery, accountability and redress across borders as preliminary processes. The practicalities of how we operationalise regional reconciliation are challenging but not insurmountable. The reluctance of nation-states to devolve their sovereignty and adopt processes that might be seemingly outside of their sphere of authority and control through the establishment of cross-border institutions will be a primary obstacle to implementing regional reconciliation. Articulating the compelling case for a policy of regional reconciliation exposes the limitations of retaining a state-centric approach to dealing with the past and ensuring redress and accountability.

When we apply a regional lens to reconciliation, it becomes evident that the war-affected states and communities in close proximity to one another would need to recognise their regional interdependence. Furthermore, these states and communities would need to engage in a genuine regional dialogue in order to identify the issues that have caused deep divisions and generated violence in the past. As with processes for promoting reconciliation nationally or locally, regional reconciliation will require the creation of spaces to develop inclusive narratives on the past and shared visions for the future. There is a need to move beyond transitional justice and reconciliation processes that have been largely state-led and restricted to national borders. Consequently, despite the growing acknowledgment of regional conflicts, regional reconciliation has *not* been the norm. Regions have to find collective solutions to the conflicts contained in their spheres of influence through a new policy framework of regional political reconciliation.

### **The Three Pillars of Regional Reconciliation**

Regional reconciliation requires three pillars in order to become functional, namely:

1. Leader-to-leader dialogue and problem-solving;
2. Government-to-government joint policy development and implementation;
3. People-to-people professional, academic, social, entrepreneurial exchange;

Sustained dialogue at the leadership level is the most crucial of these pillars due to the centrality that leaders play either as war-lords or peacemakers. Leaders need to convene the difficult conversations with their counterparts some of whom they are actively fighting against, either overtly through military support of armed militias stationed in their respective countries, or covertly through surreptitious intelligence subterfuge.

Building upon the policy and decision-making guidance provided by leaders, governments need to work out the practical modalities of implementing the regional reconciliation policy with specific concrete interventions. More specifically, governments should identify the resources that will be utilized to support the implementation of these processes, including supporting leader-to-leader dialogues as well as facilitating access for people-to-people interactions as they are required, without influencing the content and outcome of the people-to-people processes.

The people-to-people exchanges are already a common feature of the regional reconciliation landscape and are happening around the world. These can be convened by civic, academic, business and cultural leaders without the approval of the states, though they can benefit from the support of governments. Consequently, people-to-people processes are the most flexible of the three pillars to convene and operationalize.

### **Regional Reconciliation as an Intermediate Phase of Regional Integration**

If regional reconciliation is operationalised in a progressive and cascading manner it can contribute towards regional integration. In the absence of a genuine belief in the intentions of neighbouring countries then it becomes difficult to achieve regional integration. This is currently the situation that bedevils Africa's sub-regions. Consequently, the processes and mechanisms that are designed and adopted to

implement regional reconciliation will undoubtedly play a catalytic role in promoting regional integration. Regional integration requires a high degree of coordination and harmonization of policy agendas which the three pillars of regional reconciliation can contribute towards. More specifically, leadership, government cooperation and citizen buy-in are equally the core ingredients of regional integration.

### **Regional Dimensions of the Somali Conflict System**

Perhaps one of the most critical examples of the need for regional approaches to reconciliation is the situation in Somalia. Following the disintegration of the Siad Barre regime, the resulting centrifugal forces fragmented Somalia's central sovereign structure and the state in effect disintegrated. A series of peace agreements ensued. However, following the failed UN interventions in the early 1990s backed strongly by the United States, which led to the death of foreign troops (dramatised in the Hollywood fictional film *Black Hawk Down*), the international community has had a lukewarm approach to further engagement in Somalia.

The current African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has singularly failed to stabilise and consolidate peace. Despite the existence of a government that has nominal support within the country, the Somali crisis continues unabated. Furthermore, the Somali crisis has spilt over into Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, has drawn Eritrea into the conflict system, and has generated maritime insecurity and piracy in the Indian Ocean.

Throughout the crisis, neighbouring countries have intervened ostensibly to address their own self-defined national interests. Ethiopia undertook military operations in Somalia, and the current peacekeeping intervention by the AU includes troops from Uganda, Kenya and Burundi.

Fast forward to October 2013, when we witnessed what seemed a surreal event: a vicious attack over several days against unarmed civilians in the commercial Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya. This attack was directed by the *Al-Shabab* movement, which is fighting the AU troops in Somalia. Indications are that the participants in the attack were not only from Somalia but were in fact drawn from many countries, including the United Kingdom and Norway. In March 2015, 147 students were killed in the Garissa University massacre, which was believed to have been executed by the *Al-Shabab*. Following the Westgate Mall and Garissa University attacks and assuming that the indications that this was conducted by the *Al-Shabab* militia were true, the question becomes: can the Kenyan and international victims find a basis for redress?

We can also turn the question around: Are innocent Somali citizens in Somalia, who may have been negatively impacted upon - as collateral damage - by the history of military incursions by neighbouring countries, also entitled to some form of redress? Given this new reality that we are in, it does not only matter what is done internally in Kenya in terms of reconciliation. If nothing is done in Somalia to promote people-to-people reconciliation with societal counterparts in Kenya, then we can expect further attacks along the lines of what was witnessed in October 2013, in Nairobi, and March 2015 in Garissa.

Today, military operations continue in Somalia to root out and eliminate *Al-Shabab*, with US drone assistance operating out of the American military base in Djibouti. This will only get the region so far, and is a case of treating the symptoms rather than the causes. Even if all of the *Al-Shabab* militia members are eliminated, the extremist views that they harbor might simply be adopted by another grouping. It seems that promoting genuine people-to-people reconciliation in Somalia and linking this to people-to-people reconciliation processes in Kenya, not least because Kenya has a sizeable Kenyan citizens of Somali heritage, is ultimately a more effective and sustainable approach to reducing the war and strife generated by the Somali conflict system.

Given the fact that Kenya is on its own journey of national reconciliation, due to the aftermath of the post-electoral violence, and now with the added dimension of the Westgate attack, there is the increased prospect for further ethnic polarisation and the targeting of Kenyan citizens of Somali heritage. So there is an additional need: to implement cross-border people-to-people reconciliation between Kenya and Somalia.

### **The 2013 South Sudan Conflict and Regional Reconciliation**

The violent conflict in South Sudan which escalated on 15 December 2013, plunged the young country into a debilitating and brutal conflict which began as a dispute between members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM), notably the incumbent President Salva Kirr and his deputy, former Vice-President Riek Machar. The conflict immediately drew in Uganda, which deployed troops into South Sudan to shore up Kirr's government. Machar in turn received diplomatic, political and military support from the government of Sudan. In addition, Juba was transporting arms through logistical routes in Kenya, given the long-term relationship between the South Sudanese and Kenyan elites.<sup>[5]</sup> Similarly, Ethiopia, which shares a border with South Sudan, has economic interests in South Sudan and consequently wanted to see an outcome that would be to its advantage. In effect, the South Sudan conflict immediately took on regional dimensions.

The mediation process was led by Seyoum Mesfin, the former Ethiopian Foreign Minister, with Lazarus Sumbyeio, the Kenyan envoy, as part of the third party intervention team. In August 2015, the South Sudan Peace Agreement was ultimately signed, even though shortly thereafter it was periodically violated by both sides. For all intents and purposes, the Peace Agreement will continue to be implemented in this imperfect condition of continuing incidents of sporadic violence. This suggests that unless a genuine and urgent commitment is undertaken to operationalize all three pillars of regional reconciliation, namely, the leader-to-leader, government-to-government and people-to-people dimensions then the South Sudan Peace Agreement is unlikely to succeed. The ability of the South Sudan government to implement the Peace Agreement will be contingent on leader-to-leader dialogues between Kirr, Machar, Museveni, Al Bashir, Desalegn of Ethiopia and Kenyatta of Kenya. In addition, given the dispersal of the South Sudanese diaspora into Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda as well as around the world, means that there is significant scope for them to convene people-to-people regional reconciliation processes, with a view to improving the relationship with neighbouring

countries in the Horn of Africa. A regional reconciliation process that draws in all of the protagonists, antagonists and stakeholders involved in the South Sudan crisis, can in fact serve as the platform for a genuine and sustained dialogue which can begin to address the malignant and corroded relationships that persist in the Horn of Africa region.

### **People-to-People Regional Reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea**

In light of the historic tensions between the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea, there have been no open leader-to-leader or government-to-government initiatives that have entrenched a framework of regional reconciliation. However, at the cultural level people-to-people exchanges have been transpiring between Ethiopians and Eritreans in an informal manner. For example, cultural exchanges in terms of the exchange of music between Addis Ababa and Asmara, contributes in a small way towards people-to-people interaction which can cascade and be further amplified into government-to-government exchanges, which can at some point down the line lay the foundation for leader-to-leader dialogue.

### **Examples of People-to-People Regional Reconciliation**

The Karamoja Cluster Project works across the Kenyan and Ugandan borders to promote people-to-people regional reconciliation and peacebuilding.<sup>[6]</sup> This cross-border initiative brings together the Karamoja communities of eastern Uganda and western Kenya which have endured cyclical violence related to livestock theft and violent conflict over limited scarce resources and access to land. Concretely, this initiative utilizes the establishment of people-to-people dialogue platforms in order to address key concerns and raise pertinent issues. In addition, the initiative convene educational and training programmes to raise awareness among members of the Karamoja community as to how to promote effective strategies to ensure that the livelihood of all members is protected. In addition, the people-to-people regional reconciliation initiative is also driven by women-led peacebuilding initiatives, in order to increase the focus on how the violent conflicts and the destruction of the social fabric of societies affects the women of the Karamoja Cluster differently to their male counterparts. The cross-border initiative also draws upon the convening of cross-border cultural and sports activities to increase the levels of people-to-people interaction among the Karamoja. This form of interaction creates new and innovative opportunities to engage in dialogue and deepen the understanding between communities that have traditionally only engaged each other through violent conflict. The Karamoja Cluster Project should more appropriately be understood as a work-in-progress rather than a *fait accompli* in terms of its efforts to promote people-to-people regional reconciliation across borders. The initiative however demonstrates that regional reconciliation is in fact already taking place, and the insights drawn from the Karamoja Cluster Project can be replicated in other border regions of the Horn of Africa. This people-to-people initiative also demonstrates that higher-level and elite-driven regional reconciliation processes can also draw insights from the manner in which former enemies can come together in the spirit of addressing common concerns and developing joint solutions to enhance the livelihood of citizens of the Horn of Africa.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Implementing Regional Reconciliation

Regional reconciliation cannot proceed without the establishment of carefully constructed and coordinated infrastructure for promoting peace. Formal regional reconciliation processes could be facilitated by the state or by inter-governmental bodies, such as the IGAD, EAC or other regional bodies like the African Union (AU). These institutions would derive their legitimacy, and hence formality, from the authority of the sovereign states that constitute them. Informal regional reconciliation processes would operate outside state structures. This would include civil society interventions in regional reconciliation. In addition, the Diaspora could play a role in actively participating in and supporting regional reconciliation initiatives. Typically, informal regional reconciliation processes could complement the more formal processes, and ideally they should proceed without the sanction and imprimatur of the affected states. In practice, state-actors would want to be informed of potential informal regional reconciliation processes due to their claim of sovereignty over their territory.

Similarly, civil society needs to coordinate itself to more effectively support formal regional reconciliation initiatives. Where state and inter-governmental initiatives are lacking, civil society organisations can nevertheless pursue cross-border regional reconciliation initiatives. For example, given the novelty that would be associated with the notion of regional gender reconciliation, these processes are unlikely to receive the attention and resources that they deserve. This may require informal processes and non-governmental organisations to take the initiative to put in place processes to promote redress for victims of gender-based violence and other atrocities across borders. This would then require an appropriate infrastructure, such as civil society organising itself through a decentralised regional network, to advance work on regional reconciliation.

### Policy Recommendations

- Adopt people-to-people and leader-to-leader regional reconciliation as a strategic objective of foreign policy in the Horn of Africa and mandate regional institutions, such as IGAD and the EAC, to function as the infrastructure or mechanisms for regional reconciliation.
- Allocate the necessary resources and personnel to further develop and implement people-to-people regional reconciliation.
- Ensure that the notion of people-to-people regional reconciliation is adopted as a key pillar of peace agreements, to reflect the interdependence of countries.
- Mainstream gender considerations in designing and implementing people-to-people, as well as, IGAD and EAC and member state regional reconciliation initiatives.
- Operationalise the three pillars of regional reconciliation as they relate to South Sudan and neighbouring countries, in order to launch the process of regional stabilization and integration.
- Undertake people-to-people and national reconciliation in Somalia, as part of a larger process of regional reconciliation in the Somalia conflict system, involving Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia.
- Support and strengthen cultural exchanges in order to enhance people-to-people

interaction, particularly between Ethiopians and Eritreans, as a strategy to enhance regional reconciliation in the Horn of Africa.

- Establish an IGAD and EAC coordinating mechanism to oversee interventions to address trauma. In addition, designate and appoint advisors on trauma and reconciliation for all regional sub-bodies, who will generate policy initiatives to be implemented on the ground.

## Conclusion

While there is growing recognition of the value of regional interventions, the idea of promoting “reconciliation” across borders remains uncharted territory for states and inter-governmental organisations alike. Regional mechanisms also tend to place an emphasis on security interventions – such as conflict management and peacekeeping – that merely address the symptoms rather than the deeper causes of Africa’s conflicts. These approaches overlook the structural origins of conflict that manifest themselves so violently across borders.[8] Consequently, cross-border and joint peace and security operations focus resources on military operations – such as those of the South Sudan conflict system or the war against *Al-Shabab*. If state resources were deployed in equal measure to lay the foundations for regional reconciliation, this would be a more effective way to stabilise countries and improve their relations with their neighbours. Military operations are only a temporary stop-gap measure for containing violence and are ultimately doomed to fail, unless concrete efforts are geared towards dealing with the past and promoting regional reconciliation in the Horn of Africa.

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## Crossing Boundaries: Reflections on a festival-conference

By Surafel Wondimu

Seventy performer-thinkers from Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Israel (Ethiopian Jews), the U.S. (Women of Colour dance-theatre) and Japan gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from September 24-27, 2015 to partake in the Crossing Boundaries Festival-Conference.

In the aftermath of Performance Studies International (PSi) decision in 2013 to decentralize its annual event, various clusters took initiatives to stage their own conferences, workshops and festivals under the rubric *PSi # 21 Fluid States: Performance of Unknowing*. Ethiopia became the first country in Africa to host a PSi 21 event while various groups catered theirs in Croatia, Panama, India, Bosnia, Greece, Romania, Japan, Canada, Australia, Philippines and Lebanon.

The theme that Ethiopia's first edition of Crossing Boundaries forged for its festival-conference was *Global Humanities, North East African Homes*. Creating vessels between themselves, the global PSi events were connected to one another not just symbolically but also organically through reflexive conversations and exchanges of materials that allowed participants to reflect on their own historicities.

The Ethiopian Theatre Professionals Association collaborated with the Ethiopian National Theatre and the College of Performing and Visual Arts to take issues of ordinary lives lived along rivers and deserts and grapple with these issues and the questions they raise, in an interdisciplinary fashion. These themes did not emerge haphazardly but out of the longstanding *encounters* (meetings) that North-East-African performers have had. The Ethiopian alumni of Sundance East African Theatre Institute formulated the themes of Crossing Boundaries Festival based on the North East African artists' lived experiences.<sup>[1]</sup> In this way, performance also becomes a tool to think about issues such as political violence, security, beauty and emotions.

Crossing Boundaries was well aware of the fact that boundaries cannot be understood in alienation from a given historicity and materiality as border constructions are sites of power enactments in so far as they constrict 'free' movement of bodies within and across nation-states. Given that the North East African artists found River Nile as one common problem space due to historical legacies and current disputes around the river system, Crossing Boundaries took the River Nile as a literal as well as figurative object so as to allow performer-thinkers to work through various questions.

The conference-festival conceptualized river systems and deserts, embodied power relations and the notion of security as follows.

### **River Systems and Deserts as Universes of Episteme and Practice**

As a literal and figurative arena where shared and at the same time distinct epistemes and life forms coalesce, the River Nile allows us to think with and through the notion of

‘multiple’ and ‘contingent’ entry points and exits in terms of theory and performance. This framing allowed participants to go beyond binaristic, state-bounded and hierarchical conceptualizations of socio-economic and political life in the region and also with reference to boundary crossings and border constructions in the region.

However, when one talks of crossings in this region, there is also a need to go beyond conceptualizing deserts as “absence”. In this regard, perhaps one of the most important things that make boundaries and boundary crossings in the Eastern African region particularly noteworthy is that both imperial and postcolonial borders have historically traversed the desert and “the lowlands”. Amidst such realities how do individuals negotiate their identities by assuming an embodied performative mode? In what ways do the dominated attempt to circumvent the vicissitudes of colonial and imperial borders by assuming multiple identities?

### **Embodied Power**

Crossing Boundaries also thought of subjectivities as lived along river basins, the Rift Valley, mountains and low land areas, oceanic bodies and urban and rural spaces. In these spaces bodies do not wander alone but move relationally. And this includes relationships that bodies have with “power/s”. *Crossing Boundaries* presented the avenue that would enable performers/intellectuals to see how power was inscribed on bodies and how bodies could be archives/repertoires, mediums, battlefields, pens and weapons. In so far as the movement of bodies in the region is concerned, the meta-narrative of ‘migration from north to south’ preoccupies the scholarship. The meta-narrative conceals the lived experiences and the realities of mobility in the Horn region.

The festival-conference did not only interrogate the concealments but also opened up opportunities to look into the dynamics of multidirectional contingent movements of bodies that are animated by a ‘new’ global-regional political-economy. Thus, we must ask: what about other kinds of movements of bodies in the region? What possibilities would this attendance to ‘other movements’ offer to African studies?

### **Security and Home, Life and Death**

Crossing boundaries and migration in the Eastern African region is also related to “security” and has political, economic and environmental implications. Although the notion of ‘security’ has been defined by power in terms of state security/national interest, *Crossing Boundaries* was interested more in the “political” rationales of “security” and “home” and sought to understand what it means to be human particularly in this region and in the world at large. Since notions of the “global” and “local” are mutually constitutive, *Crossing Boundaries* allowed participants to grapple with questions of global “security” and “home” by taking North Eastern Africa as its locale. Informed by interdisciplinarity, the festival invited intellectuals/performers to engage with notions of ‘security’ and ‘home’ by attending to the metamorphosis of the logic of governance over time in the region .

### **Performances**

In response to the call to participate in the Crossing Boundaries event, around one hundred and fifty artists responded. Nineteen performances were staged in Addis at the Ethiopian National Theatre, Oromo Culture Center, Hager Fikir (Patriotic) Theatre, City Hall, National Museum, National Theatre Art Gallery, Mercato (the biggest open air market in Africa), Alliance Ethio-Francaise, and Asni Gallery.

More than ten thousand spectators attended the performances that engaged with manifold issues: movements/dances in the ordinary marginalized space, commodification of the female body, politics of hair in Africa, industrial farming, women's bodies, nature, nurture, emotion, sweat, blood, race, ethnicity, humanity, identity, memory, conflict, violence, performative peace building, love, marriage, revolution and peace in oneself and in the world, censorship, youth and their present condition, im/migration and food as cross-cultural identity and collaboration.

In order to flesh out these themes, performers used various forms such as dance, poetry, performative photograph exhibition, dance theatre, poetic jazz, drama, one woman and man shows, and storytelling.

### **Conference**

In the four-day event, intellectual conversations were also taking place at Alle School of Fine Arts, Mekonnen Hall (at Addis Ababa University main campus) and Goethe Institute where a keynote speech, roundtable discussion and paper presentations were delivered.

Dr. Mshai Mwangola, currently working at African Leadership Center in Kenya, gave the keynote speech under the title "Droplets of Dust, Particles of Water: Portraits of Survival from the Lake Turkana Desert." Her project is a performance-in-progress that looked into "the arid wilderness of the Great African Rift Valley" and "liminal space of the borderlands where Kenya meets its northern neighbors, Uganda, Ethiopia and South Sudan." In order to unravel the tensions, Mshai shows "real-life lessons from the peacebuilding conundrum" in the Kenyan North Rift. In so doing, Mshai offered critical insights that provoked deep conversation and opened up avenues to rethink notions of security, humanity and boundaries. Being facilitated by the senior African feminist scholar and activist, Zenebework Tadesse, the roundtable discussion also involved Dr. Elizabeth Woldegiorgis (director of modern art museum, AAU), Professor Ananya Chatterjea (dance scholar, activist and artistic director of Ananya Dance Theatre from the University of Minnesota, USA) and Mshai Mwangola to probe into notions of movement, ideas and bodies. These scholars helped participants to reflect on modernity, colonial encounters, postcolonial life forms, ideas, bodies, healing and other aspects of relational lived experiences.

The conference invited intellectuals from various disciplines who spoke to the questions that Crossing Boundaries set in an interdisciplinary manner: theatre and performance studies, dance studies, history/historiography, gender studies, art history, language studies, and hydropolitics.

### **Conclusion**

Crossing Boundaries was generally successful. The event was able to break the dependency of, Eastern African theatre and performance art events on foreign sponsorship and create an alternative platform. It was an independent act of space-making embedded in our lives that are marked by power but capable of making subversive moves from within.

Envisioning a generative social change, Crossing Boundaries will continue to craft a space where performers/intellectuals can corporeally come together and have critical conversations. Its second edition will happen in a year under the title, *Crossing Boundaries II: Performance, Climate and the Human Condition*.

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[1] A case in point would be the participant from Rwanda, a dancer who had experienced the Genocide first hand and had been displaced, and lived for years abroad before returning home. He has incorporated his experiences into his performamnces.



## Civil Society Organisations in the East African Community (EAC) integration process

By Sekou Toure Otondi

The history of East African Community (EAC) integration process is closely intertwined with that of European colonialism in Africa. With the European partition of Africa, the East African region, comprising of Kenya and Uganda, was carved out as a British Protectorate. Later Tanzania which had previously been a German Protectorate prior to the end of the First World War became part of the British East African Protectorate following Germany's defeat in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War.

The initial efforts at EAC integration process began during the colonial era in 1917, with the formation of a customs union by the British, which later expanded to include Tanganyika in 1927.[1] Following independence, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, formed the East African Common Services organization, which was later transformed into the East Africa Community in 1967.[2] However as a result of various challenges, with ideological differences being the main bone of contention, at the height of the Cold War, the first post-independence integration efforts crumbled in 1977.[3] This led to a lull in regional integration efforts for nearly two decades. It was not until the dusk of the twentieth century that the EAC member states began to mull over the need to revive the defunct EAC.

The current EAC integration process, which was formed in 1999, is more ambitious in the sense that not only does it aim at regional economic integration, but has as its ultimate goal the formation of an EAC political federation within a clearly stipulated deadline.[4] Nevertheless despite the lapses in the integration implementation timeline, the EAC integration process has deepened and widened to an extent that it's currently considered the most advanced regional bloc within Africa.[5] This view is in contrast to the earlier more pessimistic view of African integration efforts which were seen as more rhetorical than practical.[6]

However, as various analysts have pointed out, profound challenges are likely to be encountered in the harmonisation of regional monetary policies and fast tracking political federation, the last two stages of the integration efforts.[7] These challenges are however the norm, with regard to regionalism across the globe, rather than exceptions. It's therefore upon the EAC to develop innovative measures aimed at overcoming the bottlenecks on its path towards its ultimate goal of political unification.

### **The EAC integration process so far**

The EAC has deepened and widened over the years. The deepening process has been characterized mainly by strengthening of economic integration pillars, from the customs union protocol in 2005, through ratification of common market protocol in 2010, to the recent 2013 signing of economic monetary union protocol in Kampala. The widening process on the other hand has seen the Community grow from the original three

founding member states; Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, to the current five member states following the ratification of the EAC treaty by Rwanda and Burundi in 2007. However the widening, just like the deepening process seems far from over as more states seek EAC membership. South Sudan has in recent years been considered as a prime candidate for membership,<sup>[8]</sup> despite being bogged down by internal power wrangles. Other than South Sudan, there are possibilities of Ethiopia and even Somalia joining the bloc in the future. The possible addition of these states into the EAC regional bloc, or subsequently the close economic, cultural and political engagement with it is likely to shape the political, economic, and social map of the wider Horn of Africa region as greater interdependence emerges at regional, national, and sub-national levels.

### **The minimal engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in EAC integration process**

The EAC, since its inception in 1999, has made significant progress. Significant milestones have however mainly been made within the realm of economic integration, albeit with the state actors being the significant actors. The economic measures have led to increased trade across the region thus augmenting EAC member states intra-regional trade, which stood at 71.8 % of the total share, among the thirteen countries classified within the Eastern Africa cluster by the African Development Bank between, 2008 and 2009.<sup>[9]</sup>

However to ensure that EAC harnesses its full potential, it's imperative that it guarantees participation to both state and non-state actors as stipulated in articles 127(4), and 5(3)(e) of the EAC treaty.<sup>[10]</sup> It's important to note that one of the pitfalls of the first EAC, other than ideological differences, was integration exclusively steered by the regional state actors devoid of involvement of regional CSOs and other interest groups. This is a challenge that the current EAC should avoid.

So far, the mainly unilateral approach of policy and project formulation and implementation by state actors, with senior government officials, and especially the heads of member states, being at the helm of policy decision-making processes, has tended to exclude the majority stakeholders, who are the EAC citizenry, from participation in the integration process. The limited engagement by the general public, especially of CSOs has led to indifference among EAC residents, who due to lack of adequate information tend to pander to the views of their governments with regard to integration issues without necessarily interrogating the proposed regional integration policies and projects and the impact on their daily lives.

### **Strengthening EAC integration efforts through the participation of CSOs**

Therefore to fast track the integration process, there is need for formation of regional CSOs, while strengthening the existing ones from the sub-national to the national levels by EAC citizens. The structure of participation by the CSOs and other non-state actors' should cut across the political, economic, and social spectrum. Strong and vibrant civil bodies are likely to complement government efforts at sensitizing citizens on the prospects of regional integration as well as play a key role in influencing policy through

its formulation, analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

State actors within the EAC should grant observer status to civil society and other non-state actors to enhance inclusivity and meaningful participation in the EAC's official decision making institutions. Although the EAC has already adopted a framework for the private sector, civil society and other interest groups the participation and ability to influence policy by non-state actors, especially by civil society groups, remains low.[\[11\]](#)

At the regional level, CSOs across the region are mainly represented by the East African Civil Society Forum (EACSOF), while the East Africa Business Council (EABC), represents the private sector. While the EABC, which represents the interests of minority established businesses entities across the region, has well defined status as an observer including participation at the secretariat and heads of states summit levels the EACSOF has a lesser role despite its wider constituency across the region at both national and sub-national levels.[\[12\]](#) This in essence denies majority stakeholders who are ordinary EAC citizens inclusion and participation in the EAC initiatives at policy formulation and implementation stages. This is likely to lead to disenchantment on the part of ordinary citizens with EAC policies and projects, as well as undermine the integration process as key stakeholders are excluded from the process.

Although the number of active EACSOF members has increased to over 61, with 59 of the members being umbrella organisations with a network membership of over 500 CSOs [\[13\]](#), the EACSOF presence at grassroots sub-regional levels is still minimal. This has rendered advocacy and participation by CSOs elitist, localized mainly within major EAC urban centres. In essence this has undermined participation of a significant number of EAC stakeholders who live in rural settings. This limitation has been further reinforced by member states dual restrictive policies on granting of observer status to CSOs that requires that; first the CSOs should have a footprint across all the EAC member countries, and secondly they should have been operational for the last three years in all the five member states.[\[14\]](#)

The EACSOF should therefore strive to increase its regional presence to the remotest grassroots regions across EAC to network with as many grassroots CSOs as possible, so as to bring them on board to influence policies at the top of EAC decision-making processes. This is important especially as integration deepens further towards political federation. The annual forum, which started in 2005, and has continued to bring together civil societies through EACSOF and EAC secretariat to bolster participatory integration efforts is a step in the right direction. The significance of this forum is attested to by the increasing number of civil society participants in the annual forum. The EACSOF National Consultations Forum, across all the five member states, in the run up to annual meetings with EAC Secretary-General also provides a participatory framework for engagement at national level. However, the consultations need to be conducted at the sub-national level to ensure increased involvement by most EAC citizens.

The civil societies across East Africa, just like their global counterparts, have accepted

regionalism as part of a changing global governance system. This has necessitated the need to organise and link up CSOs at sub-national and national CSOs at regional level for effective participation in national and regional governments decisions that impact their lives on a daily basis. To wield more influence in regional governance, the civil societies, through EACSO, should strive to develop an institutional framework while actively seeking partnership with key EAC organs and institutions, such as East Africa Legislative Assembly and East African Court of Justice. These measures will transform civil societies from being merely reactive into a major policy decision-maker. The cooperation with these two institutions, especially with regard to legislation, regional security, and human rights is likely to ensure stability in the region and mitigate crisis before it escalates as is currently being witnessed in Burundi.

### Conclusion

Whilst regional integration initiatives face idiosyncratic challenges depending on the depth and breadth of integration, each region can learn from the success of other regions to minimise pitfalls in the integration process. In the case of EAC, its major challenge is the heterogeneity of the region and strong sense of nationalism which poses major legal, structural, and political challenges to the inclusion and participation of civil society and other interest groups in the integration process. This is because each distinct group would like its voice to be heard, thus creating complexity in organisation of the numerous interest groups within the realm of official EAC decision making process.

It's therefore incumbent upon national governments across the region, international organisations, and interest groups to develop strategic and tactical ingenuity in moving integration process forward with both state and non-state actors on board. In this regard the EAC can borrow a leaf from the European Union which has established a central institution, the European Economic and Social Committee under the Rome treaty<sup>[15]</sup> as the major framework of coordinating the views of state and non-state actors on the ground. In the end the heterogeneity of EAC should be its strength and not a hindrance to providing regional public goods.

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